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Planning the 2nd Battle, The 2nd Major Regional
Conflict - Reconstitution Considerations

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by
James P. Tatum
LTC, USA

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Abstract

Planning for the 2nd Battle. The 2nd MRC Reconstitution Considerations

As the United States reduces the size of our military, our ability to reconstitute our forces when required becomes even more critical. This is true whether at the strategic level in preparing for a sequential major regional conflict or at the tactical level in preparing for the 2nd battle and follow-on missions.

The unified combat commanders as operational level commanders play a significant role in our changing military both at the tactical and strategic levels. This paper addresses the importance of incorporating reconstitution planning in their campaign plans. By doing so this aids them in fully viewing the battlefield both for follow-on missions or as the second CINC to fight in a sequential MRC. The paper focuses on reconstitution efforts for the Army but is applicable for Marine forces as well. It concludes that reconstitution is one of the most difficult operations that a commander and his unit can perform; however, done well, in a timely manner, it is a significant combat multiplier. The paper further recommends the incorporation of a reconstitution annex in all operational plans and the inclusion of reconstitution exercises in our joint task force exercises. Additionally, it recommends that reconstitution training be part of the curriculum at both the senior service and staff colleges.

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Introduction

President Bush in an August 2, 1990, speech in Aspen, Colorado, revealed the essential elements of his new national security strategy for the 1990's. This regionally oriented strategy is built on the four foundations of Strategic Deterrence and Defense, Forward Presence, Crisis Response, and Reconstitution. In this pronouncement, Reconstitution for the first time in our history was publicly articulated at the National Command Authority level as a major tenet of our military strategy. (1)

The President explained this reconstitution strategy as follows:

Our strategy will guard against a major reversal in Soviet intentions by incorporating into our planning the concept of reconstitution of our forces. By the mid-90's, the time it would take the Soviets to return to the levels of confrontation that marked the depths of the Cold War will be sufficient to allow us to rely not solely on existing forces - but to generate wholly new forces. The readiness to rebuild - made explicit in our defense policy - will be an important element in our ability to deter aggression. (2)

In his 1991 National Security Strategy, President Bush further defined and emphasized his strategy of reconstitution. He states that the ability to reconstitute allows us to safely and selectively reduce and restructure our forces. While admitting this is a difficult task that will require us to invest in hedging options that are difficult to measure, he states we must be able to reconstitute a credible defense faster than any potential opponent can generate an overwhelming offense. Additionally, he defines reconstitution to include manpower, defense technology, and the industrial base. (3)

Since the announcement of this strategy, the interpretation of what reconstitution really means has been varied and also the feasibility of this strategy and how we implement it has been widely debated. As the Clinton/Aspin administration changes from a reconstitution

foundation to long-term preparedness capabilities, the importance of the debate for our combatant commanders is not diminished. (4) The debate sparked a renewed interest in what reconstitution is and, especially, how does it affect the Commanders of Central Command, Pacific Command, and European Command.

This paper focuses on the importance of reconstitution planning to the CINC's at all levels - strategic, operational, and tactical. First, I will define reconstitution, both tactically and strategically. Then, I will attempt to provide historical framework for reconstitution operations. Additionally, I will describe the importance of reconstitution planning for the 2nd fight and also the 2nd Major Regional Conflict. Lastly, I will provide some recommendations on how to institutionalize reconstitution considerations into the CINC's planning process.

While at this time the end state of our forces after the down-sizing of our military is unknown, I contend that the final strength of the Air Force and the Navy will be sufficient numerically, technically, and tactically to counter any near-term or mid-term threat. Therefore, the focus of this paper is on planning considerations for ground forces.

One could easily assume that the United States may never again have - strategically, operationally, or tactically - as compliant an adversary as Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Armed Forces. (5) We will most probably have to prepare to fight a second or multiple battles to win the next war. Additionally, without the threat of a global war, the most serious threat is that of a sequential regional conflict. The ability to realistically plan for and execute the second regional fight is critical. Our campaign planners must understand the reconstitution process at all levels. They must assess forces after the first fight, and understand the capabilities and limitations of reorganized, regenerated forces to fight again. Reconstitution is quite possibly the most difficult task for a commander and his forces. It must be understood, planned, and trained for.

Before we analyze the reconstitution process, we must first have a clear definition of what it is.

Reconstitution - What is it?

In dealing with reconstitution, we are reminded of Admiral Ernest King's famous World War II quote that now could easily be changed to - I don't know what the hell reconstitution is, but I want it! Throughout my twenty-year Army career playing numerous computer-simulated war games, the first cry I hear when a combat commander's forces are decimated is "Logistician, reconstitute me!" Unfortunately, the primary solution is to "magic" their unit back into the game.

Reconstitution, as our war games continually point out, is not easy. It takes well thought-out plans, programs, policies, and most of all, commitment and discipline in order to be viable. As we down-size our forces, never before has reconstitution taken such a high priority.

Strategic Reconstitution

Former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney states that "Reconstitution means preserving those elements of our security that take a long time to establish or build - from defense infrastructure, to large weapons platforms, to highly trained personnel on whom our military depends". (6)

Colonel (Ret) John Brinkerhoff formerly of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) states that "Reconstitution is a kind of mobilization. Mobilization is the process of marshaling resources to support actual or possible military operations. Reconstitution is the process of marshaling resources to form 'wholly new forces' to increase the actual and

potential military power of a nation". (7)

While both definitions touch on the heart of strategic reconstitution, I believe that Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell has provided the most complete definition. In his January 1992 National Military Strategy, he states:

Reconstitution is intended to deter such a power from militarizing and, if deterrence fails, to provide a global warfighting capability. Reconstitution involves forming, training, and fielding new fighting units. This includes initially drawing on cadre-type units and laid-up military assets; mobilizing previously trained or new manpower; and activating the industrial base on a large scale. Reconstitution also involves maintaining technology, doctrine, training, experienced military personnel, and innovation necessary to retain the competitive edge in decisive areas of potential military competition. (8)

Powell adds to the other definitions that Reconstitution is part of our deterrence strategy - a major premise - and also emphasizes training. This clearly articulated definition must, however, go further if fact is part of our strategy. First, it needs a standard of measurement. The President has challenged that "the standard by which we should measure our efforts is the response time that our warning processes would provide us of a return to previous levels of confrontation in Europe or the world at large. We and our allies must be able to reconstitute a credible defense faster than any potential opponent can generate an overwhelming offense". (9)

Secondly, it must be placed in a framework of consistent periodic analysis of the threat, incorporating an analysis of our ability to mobilize, equip, and train new forces. Lastly, in order to be a viable strategy, our country must view this as an insurance policy and have the will and the determination to stay the course and not mortgage our future for a short-term gain.

I believe that the Reconstitution Strategy as stated by President Bush and reinforced by the National Command Authority is not viable, nor does it provide near to mid term support for the combat commander. I would recommend a scale-downed version that I would call Regional Reconstitution Strategy. One that provides our country the ability to quickly reconstitute a portion of the forces after a Major Regional Conflict in order to be prepared to fight the "second war" - another Major Regional Conflict. While not in the scope of this paper, it would provide capabilities for realistic near-term planning for operational commanders. While the CINC's have responsibility and a voice in this strategy debate, clearly their near-term focus must be on tactical reconstitution.

Tactical Reconstitution

In 1988, then LTC James C. Hinebaugh, Jr. wrote an individual study project while a student at the Army War College titled Reconstitution - Winning Beyond the First Battle. Colonel Hinebaugh and I both commanded the 202nd Forward Support Battalion, 8th Infantry Division (Mechanized) in Mannheim, Germany. He commanded from 1984 to 1986, and I commanded from 1990 to 1992. We were also company commanders together in the 8th ID in the 1970's. As I read his article, I could easily relate to his frustrations as our experiences have been similar. I am pleased that the Army has adopted many of his recommendations and is now working to implement a new reconstitution doctrine.

In his paper, Colonel Hinebaugh states that the ability to reconstitute combat power quickly and effectively will be especially critical on the modern battlefield with its proliferation of extremely lethal weapons systems. Early battles, especially in a short warning scenario, may be won or lost depending on the commander ability to reconstitute his combat power. Given such a scenario and shortfalls in sealift, airlift and forward-deployed forces, he

contends that commanders will have to fight with little or no backup support. He further states that the fact the U.S. no longer has the large technological lead and the strong industrial base it once enjoyed, makes reconstitution an important issue. He contends that Reconstitution has taken an added significance as a result of the Airland Battle concept. Mobile forces fighting deep in the enemy rear will certainly have to rely heavily on reconstitution of some form as their primary means of sustaining combat power. He also says that while reconstitution has become increasingly critical to sustainment of combat power during war, the U.S. Army has done very little to develop reconstitution doctrine, planning and training. While billions of dollars have been invested in bigger, faster, and more lethal weapons systems, few resources have been dedicated toward developing concepts, doctrine, and techniques for battlefield sustainment. The net result is that the Army's ability to sustain the fight beyond the first battle has not improved. Hinebaugh believes that the application of technology and development of doctrine could significantly enhance the field commander's ability to sustain or rebuild combat power. (10)

While recognizing, that with the demise of the Soviet Union, the near-term threat as we viewed it is considerably different than when Colonel Hinebaugh wrote his article, the premises he argues are still valid.

Whether articles like Hinebaugh's and opinions of certain Army leaders or the President's 2 August 1990 revised strategy created a renewed interest in reconstitution, the fact is the Army now has a new Reconstitution doctrine. The 1992 U.S. Army Field Manual 100-9 Reconstitution defines it as follows:

The extraordinary actions that commanders plan and implement to restore units to a desired level of combat effectiveness commensurate with mission requirements and available resources. It transcends normal day-to-day force sustainment actions. However, it uses existing systems and units to do so. No resources exist solely to perform reconstitution. (11)

This doctrine was, in fact, influenced by the actions of Major General David M. Maddox when he commanded the 8th Infantry Division. In 1990, through his leadership and insistence, the Division Support Command developed a reconstitution concept that led to the new doctrine. As the V Corps Commander and now as the USAREUR Commander, General Maddox has incorporated a company-sized Reconstitution exercise in every Brigade Germany Rotation through the Grafenwohr gunnery training facility and also a Battalion level exercise during each Brigade rotation through the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) in Hohenfels, Germany.

The key element of each of these exercises is the degradation of units after they have been reorganized or regenerated. After a unit goes through a battle and simulated casualties are assessed, the unit is regenerated with new soldiers and with repaired equipment and then returned to the fight. The goal is over time to determine problems with tactical reconstitution, develop standard procedures and also, most importantly, to determine how effective a regenerated unit is. For example, a unit starts with combat power capability of X. The unit is attrited by 40% and then regenerated back to 100%. He then fights, however, at a .8X capability. This analysis can be useful to the commander as he determines how to best fight the second fight with regenerated units.

The first Battalion-sized reconstitution exercise at CMTC was completed in October of 1992. While I had hoped to incorporate the specific results of that exercise in this paper, unfortunately, the results have not as yet been released. Understanding the Army's Tactical Reconstitution Doctrine and the potential uses and benefits from this Doctrine are, however, important for the campaign planner. Overtime, I believe the data generated from each rotation will provide information to the CINC as he develops his campaign plan.

The U.S. Army's Tactical Reconstitution includes reorganization, assessment, and regeneration.

Reorganization is the action to shift resources within a degraded unit to increase its combat effectiveness. Commanders of all types of units at each echelon conduct reorganization. They reorganize before considering regeneration. In fact, as the then V Corps Commander, LTG Maddox, at a 3-day Corps-wide Service Support Conference, said "We don't want to regenerate any echelon in the Corps if we can achieve the same objective through Reorganization". (12)

Reorganization may be immediate or deliberate. Both forms may include such measures as cross-leveling equipment and personnel; matching operational weapons systems with crews; and/or forming composite units (joining two or more attrited units to form a single mission-capable unit with both forms. The goal is to improve the unit's capability until more extensive efforts can take place - if resources, the tactical situation, and time permit.

There are two types of reorganization - immediate and deliberate. Immediate is the consolidation and reorganization conducted immediately after seizing an objective or withstanding an attack; clearly, a normal standard operating procedure (SOP) act of our combat leaders for years. Deliberate reorganization is conducted when somewhat more time and resources are available; usually, occurring farther to the rear than immediate reorganization, using similar procedures - however, some replacement resources may be available. Also, equipment repair is more intensive, and more extensive cross-leveling is possible.

Another critical element of the Army Tactical Reconstitution process is assessment. Assessment measures a unit's capability to perform its mission. Generally, it occurs in two

phases with the unit commander conducting the first phase. He continually assess his unit before, during, and after operations. If he determines it is no longer mission capable even after reorganization, he notifies his higher headquarters. His commander either changes the mission of the unit to match its degraded capability or removes it from combat. External elements may also have to assess the unit after it disengages - the second phase. These elements do a more complete evaluation to determine regeneration needs. They also consider the resources available.

Regeneration is the rebuilding of a organization. It requires significant replacement of personnel, equipment, and supplies. These replacements may then require further reorganization. This is a higher level of reorganization that the unit can do during normal reorganization without adequate personnel resources. Regeneration involves reestablishing or replacing the chain-of-command and conducting mission essential training (METL) to get the regenerated unit to standard with its new soldiers and equipment. Because of the intensive nature of regeneration, it occurs at a regeneration site after the unit disengages. It also requires considerable help from higher echelons. Since regeneration typically requires large quantities of personnel and equipment, commanders carefully balance these needs against others in the command.

While Army doctrine states that regeneration is determined by the commander two levels higher than the unit to be reconstituted (ie, Division Commanders reconstitute/regenerate Battalions), I contend that the decision is really three levels higher. For example, even though a Division Commander has the personnel to conduct regeneration, more often than not, the Corps Commander or Theater-Level Commander controls the equipment and personnel replacements necessary to regenerate a battalion. Assuming the commander two levels up receives the resources, he forms a regeneration task

force to conduct the external assessment and executes the regeneration. The task force includes both operational and Combat Service Support elements. Reconstitution is not solely a Combat Service Support (CSS) operation, though CSS plays an integral role. Units receive CSS throughout all phases of operation. CSS activities help prepare a unit to perform its mission, sustain it during operation, and bring it back to a specified level of effectiveness after an operation. Normal CSS activities occur throughout operations up to and including reorganization. What distinguishes CSS during regeneration is that it occurs along with other regeneration activities of reestablishing the chain of command, training, and building unit cohesion. It also involves a very high level of CSS activity requiring a task force. The task force temporarily dedicates support to the attrited unit. It also should occur in a relatively secure regeneration site.

As I stated previously, Reconstitution is not just a logistical operation. Operational Commanders must make tough decisions. The commander is in the best position, with staff assistance, to determine if a reconstitution is required. The Commander must know the acceptable level of degradation a unit can accept. He also must know the follow-on mission. Reconstitution is not a panacea to force structure problems prompted by grinding units into virtual decimation. When Reconstitution efforts are conducted there is a degradation of available force structure until Reconstitution of that unit is accomplished. Also, the commander must recognize that because of the dedication of significant CSS assets to reconstitution, there will quite possibly be a degradation of CSS elsewhere.

The Tactical Reconstitution Process

Provided below in bullet format are the key elements in the Army's Reconstitution process.

- Units develop Standard Operating Procedure and train for reconstitution.

- Units must include reconstitution in their OPLANS.
- Unit commanders continually assess unit effectiveness and reorganize as required.
- When a unit commander and his higher headquarters determine reorganization can not restore a unit to its required level of effectiveness, they recommend regeneration.
- The RTF begins the assessment based on available information. The directing headquarters adjusts the regeneration plan as necessary.
- The attrited unit reestablishes minimum essential command structure as necessary and moves to the regeneration site. Elements of the RTF link up with the unit to provide supplies and services to help it move.
- The RTF receives the unit at the site and provides essential soldier sustainment. At the same time, the assessment element completes the formal assessment of the unit. It identifies the total resources required to regenerate the unit.
- The first commander in the chain of command controlling all the resources required to regenerate the unit decides whether to regenerate the unit, carry out further deliberate reorganization, or use the resources elsewhere in the command.
- If the commander decides to regenerate the unit, the RTF and attrited unit simultaneously carry out the following four activities during the actual execution of the regeneration process:
 - They complete the reestablishment or reinforcement of the chain of command and its control over the unit as required.
 - They provide the required personnel, equipment, supplies, and services.
 - The unit conducts individual and collective training until help from the RTF.
 - The RTF evaluates the unit's combat effectiveness for further operations. (13)

Historical Perspective

A detailed historical analysis of Tactical Reconstitution is clearly beyond the scope of this paper; however, we can benefit from the conclusions that Nathan T. Power derived from

his study of reconstitution efforts in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and by the Israeli Army in 1973.

The importance of reconstitution during World War II was stated by one author in this way:

The sheer size of the problem may be gauged from the fact that on the average, three months on intensive combat in World War II cost an American infantry regiment a hundred percent of its personnel in casualties. (14)

In Power's analysis of the 28th Infantry Division during World War II, he contends that because of the lack of advanced planning, that the execution of the reconstitution operation was slow in developing. This resulted in the loss of combat power for a substantial period of time. He surmises that had the decision to reconstitute been part of the estimate process and executed by a predetermined plan, it would have resulted with far less adverse impact on the operational plan for the Huertegen Forest. (15)

In all of the wars the primary method of reconstitution was by individual replacement and reorganization by individual commanders. Only during the Israeli War was a unit successful in the timely regeneration of combat power. The Israelis would, in preplanned operations, move units back to the rear for re-arm, refit and re-train operations. Forty-eight hours later they would recommit this force. He contends the keys to this successful operation were timely decisions by Division and Corps Commanders, preplanning done during the estimate process and standard procedures used for reconstitution. (16)

During the Korean War and Vietnam, we continued primarily with a unit replacement/reorganization concept at Division level. Here again Powers points out that the planning was not done in advance. He states that the net result is difficult to assess; however, had detailed plans for regeneration of units been developed and executed, more combat

power could have been quickly generated thus saving lives. Also, he does review the concept used in Korea to swap a deployed division for a fresh one moving into the theater. This was done with two reserve divisions, the 45th and 40th with the 15th Cavalry and 24th Infantry Divisions. This rotation had strong Congressional support to get reserve forces committed. This was accomplished but not without significant difficulty. The primary disadvantage was the trade-off of well-seasoned troops for those that were inexperienced and thus a loss of time and combat power by the U.N. forces. (17)

My point in this quick analysis is by not being preplanned, the operations were done less than satisfactorily and also the reduced combat effectiveness of the units was not fully recognized by commanders. Units were committed the "same way" even though less capable. Had the commanders and planners fully understood, planned for, and executed deliberate reconstitution operations, the outcome quite possibly would have been better.

Powers concludes that the key part of the concept of reconstitution is advance planning. I concur in his belief that the estimate process should include reconstitution options. Reorganizing prolongs the combat power of a tactical force even when isolated on the battlefield. However, Powers believes the decision to reorganize cannot be substituted for regeneration. A unit that requires more than reorganization to sustain its combat effectiveness, must be reconstituted using the capabilities of support units at Corps level and above. If a unit requires regeneration, it will only occur under the planning and direction of the corps or higher commander since the assets necessary to successfully regenerate exist there. Successful reconstitution results in sustained combat power.

Finally as we view history, did we learn any lessons for use in our most recent experience at Desert Storm? According to one of General Schwarzkopf's planners, a member of the four-man School of Advanced Military Studies' planning cell, reconstitution

was also an afterthought. Only in early January of 1991, the determination was made that the ability to regenerate combat power was necessary. Armor and Infantry platoons were quickly deployed from V Corps in Europe to be small unit replacements as required. These platoons were pre-placed to support different Divisions in order to sustain the drive into Kuwait. Fortunately, this was not necessary. If a commander does have the luxury of many small units as reserves, this is a viable option to continue momentum. (18)

The CINC and Reconstitution

According to a recent RAND study, "No matter how the military mixes reserves and active forces when the drawdown is over, the United States will be unable to respond simultaneously to two major regional military crises." The study further states the military could fight two conflicts at once as long as they started at least 128 days apart; however, the immediate call-up of reserve forces would be needed even to accomplish this. (19)

With this as a backdrop, it is imperative that the CINC's get fully involved in the reconstitution process - both strategic and tactical. Since CINC's link battles and engagements in an operational design to accomplish strategic objectives, they have a role in both strategy and tactics.

From a strategic view, they are interested in the force structure available to them. Since the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, they have a greater role in both the strategic planning process and the planning, programming, and budgeting business. As they incorporate reconstitution planning coordination into the plans, they can better articulate their true requirements to the services and the National Command Authority. As they plan for the a sequential MRC, they know they will receive less strategically and likely will inherit some bloodied forces that have less combat power. By understanding how best to reorganize and

regenerate, the CINC can better provide substance to his vision of a campaign plan. He can use this process to help shape his concept. He can more fully understand when and where to most effectively apply combat power.

As General Dwight Eisenhower once said, "It's not the plan that is important it's the planning process that is critical." (20) As we institutionalize the reconstitution process in our doctrine and training, we will be able to more realistically determine the best time and way to regenerate combat power.

Conclusion

Reconstitution of units is without question one of the most difficult tasks for a military unit. The CINC must play an active role in this process. It must be planned for! It requires discipline but, when used effectively, it is a great combat multiplier.

While we have not used reconstitution effectively in the past, nevertheless, the pieces of the puzzle are available for the future. As we down-size, we must learn how to effectively interlock the pieces to paint the battlefield the way we want. The new Army Reconstitution Field Manual is a start. However, reconstitution information is not available nor mentioned much at the joint level. We must instill the process in our doctrine, training and planning.

Our Navy and Air Force currently possess overwhelming combat power. Our ground forces need to develop and fine tune reconstitution SOPs at the Combat Maneuver Training Center, the Joint Readiness Training Center and the National Training Center. As we build on that tactical data, we must realistically include it in our operational wargames and plans.

Recommendations

First, we must commit ourselves to learning the reconstitution process. This understanding is imperative to win the second battle or second regional conflict with a smaller force. Joint reconstitution doctrine should be developed. LANTCOM and other CINC's should incorporate reconstitution excursions in all exercises. All operation plans for CENTCOM, EUCOM, PACOM, and Joint Task Forces should have a reconstitution annex and be reviewed by the Joint Staff. Currently, our operation plans logistics evaluation focuses on transportation feasibility and logistics sourcing of plans. We must incorporate an overall sustainment assessment of the plan to include reconstitution capability. Additionally, the importance of the reconstitution process from a planning and training perspective should be made part of the curriculum of the senior service and staff colleges.

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